



# DHS Matters!

Michigan Department of Human Services • Lansing, Michigan • November 20, 2006  
Produced by DHS Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing  
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## Sue Ellen's Bears gift to Berrien County DHS

By David Fernandez, Services Section Manager

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Berrien County DHS has partnered with a local organization to help make a child's life transition a little bit easier.

Ellen Machemer from the Sue Ellen's Bears Organization presented Berrien County DHS with an initial gift of 100 teddy bears Nov. 6. Children's services staff and supervisors accepted the gift in a brief ceremony at Berrien County DHS in Benton Harbor. Berrien DHS staff will distribute the teddy bears to children who need reassurance at a critical moment in their lives.



The Sue Ellen's Bears Organization was created with these children in mind. Since 1998 this not-for-profit group has given Sue Ellen's Bears to children through police officers, hospitals, cancer services, and children's organizations.



Civic Benefit Club & Berrien DHS employees with Sue Ellen's Bears (left to right): Brenda Houweisen, Civic Benefit Club, **Kanita Roseburgh**, foster care, **Ellen Machemer**, Sue Ellen's Bears Organization, **Michelle Souders**, CPS supervisor, **Cara Smietanka**, foster care, **Tamesha Davis**, juvenile justice, **Debbie Reaume**, foster care supervisor, **Richard Hill**, foster care, **Kelly Rhoads**, foster care, and **Paula Laquerre**, foster care.

Part of their organizational mission is to help comfort and ease the pain of children involved in traumatic situations.

Founded by Mel and Ellen Machemer, this organization was their special way of paying tribute to the memory of daughter, Sue Ellen, who they lost in 1980 as a victim of a homicide. They distributed more than 3,000 bears within the first two years.

Special thanks to **Pamela Gabriel**, Berrien County DHS section manager, and Brenda Houweisen from Civic Benefit Club for connecting DHS with this organization.

■ For more information about the Sue Ellen's Bear organization visit [www.sueellensbears.org](http://www.sueellensbears.org)

## Wayne County director honored

**Jerome Rutland**, director of Wayne County DHS (pictured with award below), received a Special Recognition Award as the **Outstanding Child Advocate of 2006** from Vista Maria, an organization dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for women and their families. Rutland received the award Sept. 15.

Through his leadership and commitment, Rutland was recognized for contributions to keep neglected and poverty-stricken families safe and providing opportunity for children and families to transition into more productive and healthier lives. Dearborn Heights-based Vista Maria is Michigan's largest non-profit residential and community-based treatment agency for abused and neglected girls.



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## Halloween in Allegan County

### *No one died or got hurt, it just looks scary*

From Susan Bailey Carman, Director  
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The staff of the Allegan County DHS celebrated Halloween Oct. 31 by dressing in costumes and decorating their aisles. Management served everyone cider and doughnuts in the afternoon when prizes were announced in a Halloween decorated conference room. Our winners:

"The Addams Family" (right) won the first place award, a \$60 cash prize. Members are (l-r) Uncle Fester (**John Jolly**),



Pugsley (**Lisa Langsdale**), Morticia (**Judy Cullen**), Wednesday (**Julie Risinger**), Gomez (**Patrick Kelly**), Grandmama (**Mary Lober**), and Lurch (**Wendy Miller**).

"Almost Paradise, Prom 1985" (below) won second Place and a \$40 cash prize.

Prom girls (left to right) are **Jill Cuperus** (crowned prom queen), **Amanda Cherian**, **Jennifer Thorpe**, and **Victoria Hillard**. Not pictured are "prom boys **Eric Rayl** (crowned prom king) and **Vinnie Paladino**.



"Scariest Costume" netted a \$5 Subway gift certificate for Uncle Fester (right below, **John Jolly**).

Other winners: Third place and \$20 cash prize to Hollywood's Red Carpet (not pictured).

Best costume award to Morticia Addams (**Judy Cullen** in "Addams Family") who received a \$5 Subway gift certificate.



## Event raises \$15,360 for Ingham County foster kids

From Julie Horn Alexander  
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The 2006 DHS-sponsored Caring About Kids silent auction, bake sale and luncheon exceeded all expectations and raised \$15,360 for foster children. Located in Lansing's Grand Tower Building, this annual auction has become one of DHS Central Office's most eagerly awaited charity activities of the year.



Caring About Kids is a Lansing-based charity that does fundraising and donates the funds to assist Ingham County foster kids. DHS Central Office staff have traditionally sponsored and administered this once annual event. All money raised at the raffle and silent auction is forwarded to Caring About Kids to provide "extras" for local foster children.

Nov. 2 was a very special and exciting day. Staff and visitors to the Grand Tower were greeted in the lobby by a table of 16 fabulous raffle prizes and encouraged to purchase raffle tickets. Once inside, there were tables of delicious donated baked goods and two adjoining conference rooms filled with 400 auction items; area businesses, DHS employees, and former employees donated the auction items.

The traditional pizza and soda lunch was served by "celebrity servers" including DHS director **Marianne Udow**, chief deputy director **Laura Champagne**, federal liaison and policy advisor **Lisa Brewer-Walraven**, juvenile justice director **Leonard Dixon**, and DHS retirees **Michael Downer**, **Al Holzhausen** and **Mel Haga**.

The excitement built throughout the day as people placed their silent auction bids and purchased raffle tickets. Bids were closed and successful bidders contacted to pick up their purchases. At 4 p.m. the lobby filled with employees eagerly awaiting the drawing by security guard Rosie Emury of the 16 raffle prizewinners. The grand prize 50-50 winner of \$2,951 was Sandy Cain.

The event coordinators this year were DHS employees **Nancy Ridley** and **Julie Horn Alexander**. Committee chairs (and DHS employees) were **Ruth Barnhill**, **Janice Berry**, **Michael Guasco**, **Chris Heisler**, **Kathi Pioszak**, **David Russell** and **Linda Tobia**.

Thanks to Director Udow and the Executive Staff for their sponsorship and support of this important event. Yes, **TOGETHER**, we create brighter lives for foster children and give them a reason to celebrate!

■ For more information about Caring About Kids go to [www.caringaboutkidsinc.org/](http://www.caringaboutkidsinc.org/)



## Monroe County Halloween “pumpkin giveaway” a great success

From Polly Carroll, Community Resource Coordinator  
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The spirit of Halloween was not hindered by the wind and rain at Monroe County DHS on Friday Oct. 27, where kids gathered to receive pumpkins, trick-or-treat bags with candy, pages to color, and inserts including safety tips for parents. Monroe County DHS gave away trick-or-treat bags, candy and pumpkins to nearly 100 children and parents who braved the wet and chilly conditions.

The event was planned several weeks in advance and informative flyers were posted throughout the agency. Workers were encouraged to promote the giveaway to families with children. With the assistance of the Monroe Meijer store, The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Schmidt and Son's Farms and DHS volunteers, the pumpkin giveaway was a success. DHS is hoping to continue to provide local children with Halloween treats for years to come, with the help and generosity of others.



CPS staffer **Lisa Millyard** passing out pumpkins during Monroe County's Halloween pumpkin giveaway.

This Halloween event was coordinated and written by CPS staff member **Lisa Millyard**.

## Child and Family Services' staff jailed!

*Still, they seem happy with their predicament*

From Karen Brunson, Data Resource Analyst  
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DETROIT, October 26 – A trio of Wayne County Central Operations Child and Family Services district employees – district manager **Georgia Cambell** and administrative support personnel **Bannilla Bryant** and **Monica Gibson** – have been incarcerated and raised bail.

The three were arrested and transported from their office to a holding cell at the Hard Rock café located in downtown Detroit. They were placed in handcuffs, put in jail and afterwards they were all treated to lunch for their participation and support in a fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

They were able to raise bail on behalf of Department of Human Services staff from donations contributed from co-workers, friends and friends. The three employees raised over \$830 for the MDA.

The proceeds will help MDA fund clinics, buy equipment, fund summer camps and research projects toward a cure for this debilitating disease that affects over one million Americans a year.



Jailed CFS Central Operations staff members (left-right) district manager **Georgia Cambell** and administrative support personnel **Bannilla Bryant** and **Monica Gibson** display their predicament.

■ For more information on MDA go to [www.mdausa.org/](http://www.mdausa.org/)



## Menominee-Delta 4-H summer camp builds character, healthy habits

### *A memory of summertime as winter approaches*

From Denise Perry, Community Resource Coordinator

Menominee-Delta DHS

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NEAR CHANNING in Michigan's Upper Peninsula – This summer's Menominee-Delta County 4-H Summer Camp was a success for the 83 children who were hosted at Camp Molinare on Sawyer Lake near Channing July 24-28. This year's camp theme – "I Pledge My Health to Better Living" – is part of the traditional 4-H Club Pledge.

The 4-H Summer Camp has been a long-time collaborative effort between **Menominee-Delta Department of Human Services Volunteer Program**, the Menominee County Extension 4-H Program, and Menominee County Family Nutrition Program. The project is funded primarily through the generous donations of community sponsors, and is staffed by adult and teenage volunteers. Of the 83 children attending, 64 were from low-income or foster homes in our community whose families could not otherwise afford to give them this wonderful opportunity.

The children had a wonderful three-day adventure with educational and fun activities. There was plenty of enthusiasm over the meal schedule which included three cooked meals and two snacks a day. As a participant of the USDA Summer Food Service Program the camp meals and snacks were discounted for those children (who also qualified for reduced or free lunches during the regular school year.)

Karen Simpson, a community elementary counselor who refers eligible children to the program wrote: "The students returned from Camp Molinare filled with excitement & stories of their wonderful experience there. It was truly the highlight of their summer."

■ *James Hilton, field operations assistant for Experience Works Program & Community Resource Program Assistant for Menominee County, assisted with this article and provided the photography.*

**DHS Matters!** is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services  
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